

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 L-01 INR-05  
CIAE-00 NSAE-00 ACDA-10 TRSE-00 SP-02 PA-01  
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R 061732Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3832  
SECDEF WASHDC  
INFO USMISSION USNATO  
USNMR SHAPE  
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LONDON 03601

LIMDIS

DEFENSE FOR AMBASSADOR KOMER AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
MCGIFFERT

E. O. 11652:XGDS-1  
TAGS: UK, NATO, MPOL  
SUBJECT: NATO LONG-TERM DEFENSE PROGRAM

REF: STATE 42103

SUMMARY: SOME SENIOR UK MOD OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED  
THEIR CANDID VIEWS ON THE LTDP AND FORTHCOMING NATO  
SUMMIT. BURDEN OF UK ARGUMENTATION IS THAT  
ALLIANCE (READ US) SHOULD NOT SET, UNDER UMBERELLA OF  
LTDP, TOO HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ACHIEVEMENTS  
BY MAY. BRITISH ALSO BELIEVE WE SHOULD AVOID RISK OF  
DISAPPOINTMENT OR FAILURE BY NOT LOOKING FOR TOO  
DETAILED NEW COMMITMENTS IN AREA OF FORCE IMPROVE-  
MENTS OR PROCUREMENT COLLABORATION ON A WIDER SCALE  
"THAN IS SENSIBLE." BRITISH DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT  
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LTDP IS PROFOUNDLY IMPORTANT AND THAT IT CAN BECOME  
IMPORTANT CATALYST GIVING AN IMAGINATIVE LIFT AND  
DRIVE TO FUTURE PLANNING AND COLLECTIVE EFFORT.  
SUCCESS IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE RESTS, THEY BELIEVE, ON  
SETTINO OUR SIGHTS REALISTICALLY AND OR GIVING FULL  
SUPPORT TO SELECTED MEASURES AIMED  
AT IMPROVING THE COLLECTIVE POSTURE OF NATO.

THE IMMEDIATE AIM MUST BE TO SET THE WHEEL IN MOTION  
EVEN IF THE ROUTE TO THE FINAL DESTINATION IS NOT YET  
FULLY KNOWN LET ALONE AGREED. END SUMMARY.

1. BASED ON SEVERAL LENGTHY CONVERSATIO.NSS  
POL-MIL ATTACHE HAS HAD WITH UK O/FFICIALS  
INCLUDING QUINLAN (DUS/PP) AND HENN (HEAD, DS-12), THE  
FOLLOWING POINTS EMERGED:

2. WHITEHALL FEELS IT IS TOO EARLY TO TAKE MEANINGFUL  
STOCK YET OF TF EFFORTS NOTING THAT  
THE REPORTS FROM THE TEN AREAS OF STUDY WILL TOTAL OVER  
"A THOUSAND PAGES" WITH "HUNDREDS" OF RECOMMENDATIONS.  
OFFICIALS SAY THAT THEY WILL HAVE THEIR  
WORK CUT OUT TO PROPERLY DIGEST THE REPORTS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS BUT WE MAY REST ASSURED THAT AS  
FAR AS THE UK IS CONCERNED, THE APPROACH TO THE LTDP  
TASKS WILL BE CONSTRUCIVVE.

3. CONCERNING PARA 3 REFTTEL, BRITISH INSIST POINT IS  
WELL TAKEN AND THEY RECOGNIZE--AS WELL AS INSISTING  
THEY ACCEPT--THAT IT WILL TAKE BOTH DEFT HANDLING  
AND SOME FORCE TO FOLD INTO CURRENT PLANS AND  
COMMITMENTS NEW PROPOSALS YIELDED BY THE  
TF EXERCISE. AS FAR AS THE UK IS  
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CONCERNED, "AFFORDABILITY" IS A MAJOR CONSTRAINING  
FACTOR IN THAT ALMOST ALL OF THE PROMISED THREE  
PERCENT INCREASE IN DEFENSE SPENDING (STARTING IN FY  
79/80) WILL BE EARMARKED "TO SUSTAIN" THE ALREADY PLANNE  
PROGRAMS OF FORCE MODERNIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT. THE  
IMPLICATION OF THIS IS CLEAR: THE UK WILL HAVE LITTLE  
ROOM FOR MANEUVER BETWEEN PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS ALREADY  
COMPETING FOR A BITE AT THE INCREASED ASSETS, UNTIL  
SEVERAL YEARS DOWNSTREAM.

4. OFFICIALS INSIST THAT EVEN WITH THE BEST WILL IN  
THE WORLD, THE MOD'S CENTRAL DEFENSE PLANNING AND  
BUDGETING SYSTEM STILL KNOWS SO LITTLE OF WHAT THE TFS  
ARE GOING TO RECOMMEND, SPECIFICALLY, THAT CHOOSING  
AMONG HEAVILY COMPETING DEMANDS ON LIMITED RESOURCES  
WILL POSE VERY REAL DIFFICULTIES.

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5. MOREOVER, THERE EXISTS A COMPOUND OF DEEP-SEATED RELUCTANCE TO MODIFY EXISTING PLANS (WHICH MOD INSISTS REST ON "SERIOUS THOUGHT" AND TOUGHLY FOUGHT BATTLES ABOUT COMPETING PRIORITIES) AND UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE AVAILABILITY OF ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO COVER NEW DEMANDS. WHOLESOME MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING PLANS, THEY SAY, "ARE NOT ON" ON THE BASIS OF A FEW WEEKS "HURRIED STAFF WORK" BY SEVERAL STRETCHED OFFICIALS. BUT THE BRITISH ALSO SAY THEY ARE PERFECTLY PREPARED "TO MAKE CHANGES" IN THEIR PLANS IN CONTEXT OF WELL ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA FOR DEFENSE DECISION-MAKING. ON ALL FRONTS HERE, WE DETECT A VERY REAL EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LTDP EFFORT ENDORSING PLANNING WHICH WILL STAND UP TO WHAT QUINLAN TERMS "THE HARD REALITIES" OF THE COMPLEX BUSINESS OF CONSIDERING PRIORITIES BETWEEN WHAT SHOULD REMAIN OF PRESENT PLANS AND WHAT HAS TO GIVE WAY TO MAKE ROOM FOR NEW MEASURES. THE BRITISH FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE LTDP TO SURVIVE INTO THE "LONG RUN" AND HENCE BELIEVE IT IS

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ESSENTIAL FOR THAT SURVIVAL THAT THE TF RECOMMENDATIONS NOT BE "INSULATED" FROM THE HARSH REALITIES OF REALLY CLOSE NATIONAL SCRUTINY.

6. WE ARE PROMISED THAT MOD FOR ITS PART WILL TREAT WITH AN "OPEN MIND" WHATEVER MODIFICATIONS ARE SUGGESTED AND PROPOSED FOR THE UK, AND THAT MOD WILL GIVE TO ITS APPRAISAL A LEVENING OF THE "COLLECTIVE INTEREST." AT THE SAME TIME, THE BRITISH STRESS THAT IF THE LTDP IS TO ESCAPE FROM BEING MERELY AN EXERCISE IN WINDOW-DRESSING BUT IS TO BECOME THE SOLID BASIS FOR A REAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE ALLIANCE'S COLLECTIVE STRENGTH, THEN IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT GOVERNMENTS NOT BE CAUGHT COLD AT THE MAY SUMMIT BY SHOPPING LISTS OF IMPROVEMENTS WHICH ARE NOT CAPABLE OF BEING WORKED "INTO THE GRAIN" OF ESSENTIALLY EXISTING NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATO.

7. MOD OFFICIALS ASSERT IT IS MOST IMPORTANT IF THE CURRENT POSITIVE MOMENTUM IS TO BE KEPT UP THAT THE SUMMIT BE A SUCCESS--AND THAT SUCCESS MUST BE MORE REAL THAN SYMBOLIC. HENCE, THEY ARGUE THAT THE SUMMIT WILL NOT ACHIEVE CLEAR AND CONCRETE SUCCESS IF THE DEMANDS FOR NEW PROGRAMS BEAR LITTLE RELATION TO THE CURRENT PLANS, INTENTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES OF THE NATO PARTNERS. THUS, THE ADMONITIONS WE DETECT CLEARLY

ARE TO ABJURE "SENSATIONAL NEW PROMISES;" TO AVOID BEING TOO AMBITIOUS IN THE PROPOSALS THAT ARE PUT FORWARD UNLESS

THEY ARE "ADEQUATELY-CONSIDERED" PROPOSALS.

THE BRITISH SEE A SUCCESSFUL SUMMIT  
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EMERGING IF THE SUMMIT ESTABLISHES A CLEAR IDEA OF  
ACTION NEEDED

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AND GENERATES REAL  
POLITICAL PUSH RATHER THAN TRYING BY MAY  
TO PLOT A DETAILED PATH "INTO THE FUTURE."  
THEY SEE OBVIOUS BENEFITS IN USING THE "MAINSTREAM  
MACHINERY" OF NATO BECAUSE IT CAN SERVE THE LTDP'S  
PURPOSES EFFECTIVELY.

9. COMMENT: WE DETECT AMONG OUR MOD CONTACTS,  
A GROWING CONFIDENCE--AND A SENSE OF RELIEF THAT BRITAIN  
NO LONGER HAS TO ACT APOLOGETICALLY FOR NOT PULLING ITS  
FULL WEIGHT. PERHAPS THIS PROMPTED OUR CONTACTS TO  
FRANKLY EXPRESS THEIR HOPES AND FEARS ABOUT THE LTDP  
AND THE SUMMIT.

BREWSTER

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## Message Attributes

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